

Gimme Shelter

News from the Loudoun County Animal Shelter

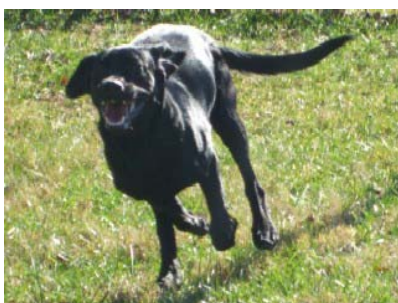
Loudoun County Department of
Animal Care & Control

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Therapy Dogs in the Making

Two Loudoun County Animal Shelter alumni are blazing new trails as the first shelter/rescue dogs to become part of the paws4prisons service dog training program!



Raider first came to the Shelter in September 2007. His owners were in the process of a divorce, and could no longer keep him. He was adopted fairly quickly, but his new owners found him to be too much of a handful, and he was returned.

Raider was a young, smart, active dog, and he needed a special home. Fortunately, paws4prisons, a program of the Paws4people Foundation, was looking for someone just like him! Paws4prisons is a program which teaches

inmates to train dogs to become Assistance Dogs.

Dogs in the program are specifically selected and screened for personality, disposition, temperament, and trainability. These dogs are then trained to perform as Service Dogs, who are specially trained to enable the disabled and handicapped to lead more independent lives by performing tasks that the person otherwise could not, or would have extreme difficulty doing for him/herself. They can also become Educational Assistance K-9 Dogs, for utilization in special education classrooms, providing services for individuals with physical, neurological, psychiatric and/or emotional disabilities.

Training is conducted by carefully selected and trained minimum security female inmates at USP Hazelton in Bruceton Mills, WV. These inmates work under the supervision and guidance of the staffs of the paws4people foundation of West Virginia and the Hearts of Gold Service Dogs.

Raider has proven to be a perfect match for the program, and in his first six weeks of training, has mastered 16 commands! He has also begun to pull wheelchairs and has also turned on his first light using a light switch.

However, Raider was not the only Loudoun County shelter dog to join this program.

Ginger, a 3 year old Golden Retriever, came to the Shelter when her owners were no longer able to care for her. Ginger was incredibly sweet and a little shy, and paws4people thought she would make a perfect Educational Assistance Dog. She was the first shelter/rescue dog accepted into the program, and she is doing great! Her name has been changed to Liberty, and she will complete her training at the end of March, and should be making her debut in classrooms in the Fall.

Everyone at the Shelter is so proud of Raider and Liberty, and we hope to continue following their progress. We'll keep you posted! For more information on paws4prisons, visit www.paws4prisons.org.



Bunny Bonanza



Mark your calendars for the third annual **Bunny Bonanza** happening Wednesday, March 19 from 10:00am-1:00pm at the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum.

Animal Care & Control is happy to be part of this annual must-see event for kids and adults of all ages. Visitors can meet and pet bunnies, while learning more about responsible rabbit care and ownership.

In addition to Animal Care & Control, you can visit with rabbits and experts from the Leaps and Squeaks Rabbit and Cavy Club of Northern Virginia and Rabbitwise. Bunny Bonanza is free with paid Museum admission. Call 571.258.3800 for more information. We'll see you there!



Welcome YAS Students!

Animal Care & Control is happy to welcome students from PRCS' YAS (Youth After School) Program to the shelter for three weeks of learning and fun!

Beginning February 27, groups of YAS students will come to the Shelter to participate in a 2 hour program designed to help familiarize them with many of the animals at the Shelter, as well as to learn basics of animal enrichment and behavior.

The groups will rotate between four stations, including canine enrichment, kennel quieting, small animal care, and cat interaction. Department staff and volunteers will show each group the fundamentals

of safe animal handling in a shelter environment, animal needs and basic care, as well as tricks and tips on how to engage animals in safe, productive play and training.

This pilot program will last for three weeks, allowing 60 children to participate. The program may extend to allow for more groups in the near future.

Thanks to our friends at PRCS, especially Jennifer Rutkowski, for helping to set up this program and for being such wonderful partners. We look forward to having the YAS students at the Shelter!



YAS students will be working with everything from chinchillas to cats!

Employee of the Month

Aierken Abulizi is February's Employee of the Month! Aierken has worked as an Animal Care Technician since 2006.

He is a team player who shows great enthusiasm for his work. His recent effort to "hold down the fort" with the dogs, while his co-workers were being assigned to assist with the care of the horses, has been outstanding. His ability and willingness to pitch-in and help as needed, especially with the

"heavy" lifting, is greatly appreciated from other members of the Department. His love and appreciation for the animals in his care was never more evident than when he befriended Dallas, a pitbull-mix dog, who he spent time with and socialized, and who was later transferred to another locality for adoption. **Thank you for all you do!**



Congratulations Aierken!

What We're Up To...

Horse Update

Animal Care & Control has begun the process of finding foster and foster-to-adoption placements for the horses in our care. Applications for fostering or foster-to-adopting are available online at www.loudoun.gov/animals.

The Department has received a tremendous outpouring of support from the community in the effort to care for, and place, these horses. Many equestrian groups have shared information about the horses with their

members, and have invited representatives from the Department to speak at their meetings. In addition, our volunteer force has nearly doubled with the addition of over 50 new equine volunteers.

On Monday, March 3, at 6:30pm, the Board of Supervisors will present a resolution of commendation to recognize the work of county staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to care for the horses.



Easter is coming! Visit www.makeminechocolate.org for more information on why chocolate bunnies make the best Easter gifts!